THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

VOL. IV. APRIL, 1908. No. 4.

WHEN FOUND—

WHEN we published Mr. Cuming Walters's article on *Edwin Drood* in our March issue, we mentally decided that it should be the last contribution to our pages on the subject for some time to come. Interesting and alluring as the subject is, we felt that it had been sufficiently well debated, and that perhaps many of our readers might be getting a little tired of the discussion. But during the month so many articles and letters have reached us dealing with the matter, that we consider it only justice to the writers of them that they should be allowed to express their views. We therefore publish the most important of these under the general heading of "Last Words on the Drood Mystery;" but, at the same time, beg to give notice "that this correspondence must now cease," for the present, at any rate.

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That the book will always create an interest from a speculative, as well as a literary, point of view, there can be no doubt, and there are evidences that its dramatic power will continue to fascinate playwrights. Only last month a drama founded upon the book, by C. A. Clarke and S. B. Rogerson, was played at the Osborne Theatre, Manchester, which differed entirely from that produced by Mr. Beerbohm Tree in London. In it the authors have not strictly followed the novel, but worked out the story on modern sensational dramatic lines. Drood is not murdered, and in the end marries Helena Landless, and her brother is wedded to Rosa Bud. An amusing account of a visit to one of the performances is given in the *Manchester City News* of March 7th, the initial at the foot of which will be easily recognised as that of the gentleman who has been chiefly responsible for the controversy which has surrounded the book for some months past.

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There has been a keen competition between the Sheffield Branch and the Toronto Branch for the distinction of being the strongest of the Dickens Fellowship. Hitherto Sheffield has occupied the first place, but now Toronto has, for the time being at least, forged its way in front with 875 members. This is due chiefly to the enthusiasm of its President, Mr. E. S. Williamson, and the energy of the Secretary, Miss M. Pennell. We congratulate them heartily, and wish them continued success. Mr. Williamson does not confine his endeavours to his own city, but does everything in his power to assist in the formation of new branches elsewhere. Recently we drew attention to his efforts in the inauguration of the Ottawa Branch, and now we have pleasure in recording the fact that another

new branch has been launched at Hamilton, and that Mr. Williamson was present at its first meeting, and helped its establishment. It starts well with over 100 members.

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Broadstairs means to show that it appreciates and values its Dickens traditions and land-marks. A project is on foot for fixing tablets to houses associated with the novelist. Fort House of course is already so hall-marked. But there are others, such as Betsey Trotwood's, the Assembly Rooms, and the house in the High Street where it is believed *Pickwick* was finished. The Broadstairs Branch of the Fellowship is responsible for the idea, and it is the intention to carry it out some time during the coming summer.

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It has been decided that the summer festival of the Fellowship shall take place at Broadstairs this year on June 20th, and perhaps the occasion may be thought to be a most suitable one for the unveiling of the tablets. It would add considerably to the success of the festival and would be most appropriate. Broadstairs is full of Dickens interests; indeed, outside Rochester and London, it is perhaps the most interesting of all the spots in Dickens-land. Dickens loved the quiet seaside town, lived there continually, and did a great deal of his writing there. One of his minor pieces, "Our English Watering Place," is devoted entirely to it. There is, therefore, much to attract the Dickensian to this now fashionable seaside resort. And we are assured that the Broadstairs Branch will do everything in its power to make the occasion notable and enjoyable. Full particulars of the festival will appear in our next issue, and we shall probably publish an illustrated article on this ideal spot in Dickens-land in our June number.

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It has not yet been possible to arrange the National Dickens Library at the Guildhall in a conveniently accessible position for public use and inspection. The cataloguing of the contents has been a greater task than was at first anticipated, but this is nearly completed, and, when finished, reference will be then practicable. We had hoped to commence a series of articles on the collection in our present issue. Unfortunately we are compelled to hold over the first instalment until May.

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We have received a copy of a new musical setting of "The Ivy Green," composed by Mr. E. H. Tiffany, of Alexandria, Ontario. It is appropriately dedicated to the Toronto Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, before which it was rendered prior to publication, and accorded a very hearty reception. The air is melodious and catching, and should be welcomed by those seeking new Dickens songs.

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Mr. A. J. Slatter, of 5, Broadhinton Road, Clapham, is issuing in a portfolio the set of twelve illustrations to *The Pickwick Papers*, drawn by A. B. Frost for an edition of the book published over twenty-five years ago, and which is now very scarce. The pictures will be printed on plate paper, and a limited number on India paper and mounted.

THE EDITOR.

THE NEWLY DISCOVERED WRITINGS OF DICKENS

By ALEX. J. PHILIP

READERS of *The Dickensian* know that during the last two years its Editor has been diligently unearthing the many stray papers Dickens contributed to various periodicals, for the purpose of including them in the sumptuous "National" Edition of the novelist's writings. The publication of these has been anxiously awaited by all students of Dickens. The first portion appeared in volume thirty-four of that edition, entitled "Reprinted Pieces," and comprised his contributions to the *Morning Chronicle*, *Daily News*, *The Times*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, *The Cornhill Magazine*, *Douglas Jerrold's Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and his introductions to Grimaldi's "Life," Overs's "Evenings of a Working Man," Proctor's "Legends and Lyrics," Townshend's "Religious Opinions," and other pieces.

The completion and magnitude of Mr. Matz's labours, however, are to be found in volume thirty-five and six of this edition, entitled "Miscellaneous Papers from *The Examiner*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, Plays and Poems," and it is in these volumes that Dickensians will find their favourite author revealed in an entirely new aspect, and there can be no doubt that their publication is an event of great literary importance, both to the student of Dickens and the reading public in general.

The papers for the most part are journalistic efforts, but journalism of the highest class. In some the author is an ardent politician of no recognised party, a party best described as "Humanity"; in others he is an economist, not always of the orthodox school; in a few he is frankly humorous, though, strangely enough, it is in these that he is weakest, possibly because the brevity of the papers leaves no room for characterisation and the expansion of the individuals. With comparatively few exceptions they are satirical, with a caustic, biting satire; sometimes in a delicate vein difficult to trace, on other occasions wielding the bludgeon of ridicule in an unmistakable manner. In all the papers he is a big-hearted man championing the cause of the oppressed, and denouncing the humbugs of life and the hide-bound ignorance and selfishness and carelessness of those in the high places of the State.

The discovery of the "Contributors' Book" of *Household Words* has made it possible to give a complete reprint of the fugitive pieces from Dickens's pen which appeared in that periodical. The "Contributors' Book" is in the possession of Mr. R. C. Lehmann, M.P., who placed it at the disposal of the Editor, Mr. B. W. Matz. Dickens's work in *The Examiner* and *All the Year Round* had already been identified, through Forster's guidance and by the late Mr. F. G. Kitton. Mr. Matz has grouped the papers and miscellanies under the headings of the periodicals in which they originally appeared, and admirably arranged them in chronological order. It is therefore all the more curious that there should be so close a relation between the papers in juxtaposition. This is particularly valuable, as it shows, not the gradual growth and change of view, but the extraordinary continuity of policy and steadfastness of purpose. Mr. Matz has appended short

notes where some elucidation has been necessary; as, for instance, that *Abaddeen* refers to Lord Aberdeen; but these notes are not intrusive or too numerous. In fact, for some readers who are not familiar with parliamentary terms and procedure, a greater number of notes might have had an increased value. It is not every one who will recognise in "The thousand and one humbugs" Lord Palmerston as the Grand Vizier Parmastoon, or Hansardadade as the at one time famous parliamentary reports. Dickens himself seems to have arrived at the conclusion that it might be a little difficult even for readers of his time, as the third and last of these allegorical Arabian Nights is rather more obvious than the others

In this short appreciation it is not possible to indicate the voluminous number of pieces now identified for the first time. Some had appeared in "To Be Read at Dusk," and others have reappeared in various forms at different times. In some cases, however, pieces have been republished as the work of Dickens which are now shown to be unequivocally by other pens. It will be seen, therefore, that the publication of these two volumes marks an epoch in the history of Dickens, and his admirers cannot afford to be without them as a part of his works.

Perhaps the most interesting of *The Examiner* articles are the three dealing with the Drouet Scandal at Tooting to which Dickens had already referred in "The Uncommercial Traveller." Drouet kept a farming establishment for pauper children, and kept it so vilely that the children died in hundreds. He was tried and acquitted, and these three articles show Dickens in the light of the children's advocate, meting out hard blows of criticism and invective as only he could under such circumstances. In the articles on "Scott and his Publishers," we find him taking up the cudgels again in defence of a brother author.

It would be invidious, if not impossible, to pick out the "best" of these pieces. Undoubtedly "The thousand and one humbugs" is amongst the most brilliant, the most satirical and genuinely humorous of them all; at the same time the subject is handled so delicately, and with that fine perception which so few writers possess, that it is not possible to say it transgresses against the canons of good taste in the slightest degree. It is a remarkable feature that at this time, when the new Licensing Bill is exercising so much influence upon the politics and commerce of the country, "Miscellaneous Papers" should contain a number of pieces which might have been written at the present time. Perhaps it is a sign of the master-hand that very few, if any, of the papers show signs of time. They are as fresh to-day as they were when they were published, and, unfortunately, they are in all too many cases equally applicable.

Paris as the Moononian Capital in "Railway Dreaming" is distinctly interesting from the point of view of autobiography, as are "Gone Astray" and "New Year's Day." In "Crime and Education," "Pet Prisoners," and articles of the same nature, the plea for education is strenuously advocated, one might almost say in season and out of season, in opposition to the repressive methods of the time, which are only now, indeed, beginning to disappear in the greater educational facilities of both the upper classes and those in

the gutter and on the kerb. "Mr. Booley at the Lord Mayor's Show" contained in the first volume, and a few others, were reprinted for the first time in the *The Dickensian* some time back. Possibly the spirit of modernity is apparent in none of the "Papers" so much as that on "Betting-shops." The remarkable thing is that the welshing bookmaker has improved his *modus operandi* so little in the fifty and odd years that have passed since the article appeared in 'Household Words.'

There is one other way in which these "Miscellaneous Papers," now presented complete for the first time, have a very special value; that is, as a reflection of the novels; or, in other words, as the foundation of facts on which the theory of the novels were built up. Most of the novels have a purpose—the mitigation of some hardship, or the redress of some social or political wrong, and it is quite easy to see in many of these papers the same idea and the same purpose expressed in a more direct, and possibly a more emphatic manner.

The plays are six in number, and the poems, some of which are reprinted for the first time, include the old favourites from *Pickwick* and other sources, amongst them the famous 'Ivy Green,' which has such an interesting little history attached to it. Some of the poems are political, others are exquisite little gems quite worthy of their author. High as Dickens's fame is already, it is not so high that it will not be increased by the identification and publication in a permanent form of these casual notable contributions from his pen; and it is to be hoped that they will be added to every edition of the author's works now existing. Twenty appropriate pictures from old prints illustrate the volumes.

COMPETITIONS FOR DICKENSIANS

THE DOMESTIC ATMOSPHERE IN DICKENS'S BOOKS

THE essays sent in for the above competition set in the February number were submitted to Mr. Robert Allbutt, who kindly consented to be judge. He writes: "All of the essays are excellent, written with taste and discrimination; but I award the palm to

MRS. ASHBY NORRIS,
Stanton Hill Farm, Stanton,
Burton-on-Trent.

"It seems to me that she gets very close to the real heart of things. Her paper evinces a delicate perception and appreciation of the identity of Charles Dickens, which is the outcome of genuine sympathy. They know best who love best."

We congratulate Mrs. Norris, and shall hope to publish her paper in a subsequent issue. In the meantime, if she will choose a book to the value of 7s. 6d., we shall be pleased to send it to her suitably inscribed.

We hope to set another competition next month.

DICKENS'S WOMEN CHARACTERS

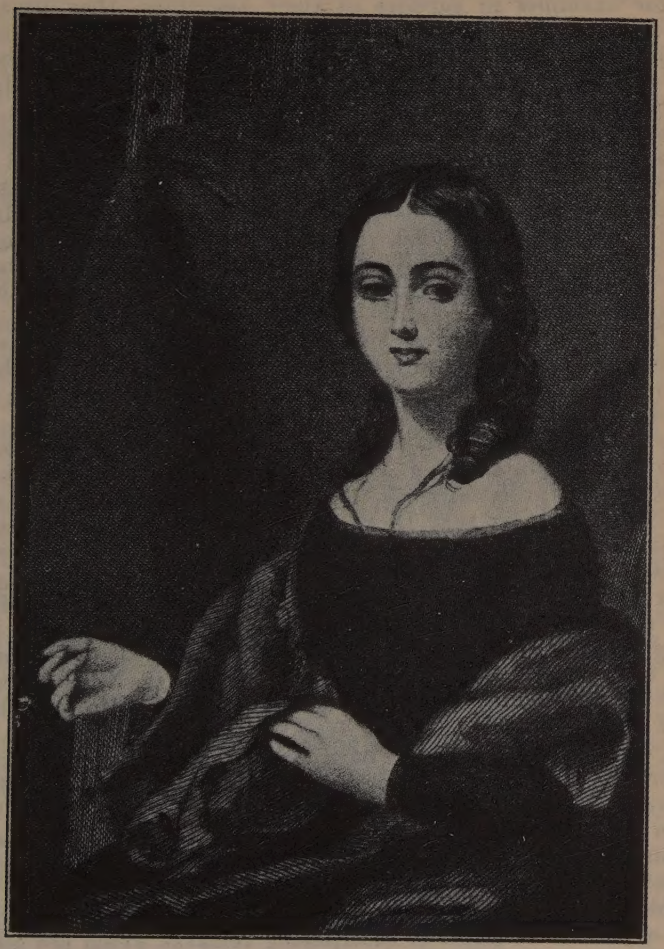
By "OLD FLEET"

I

IT is a very common assertion that Dickens could not draw a woman and was consistently unjust towards the sex. In her interesting little book, "The Philosophy of Dickens," Mrs. Baillie-Saunders says that "for the most part it is women who make the complaint." I am not so sure of that. It is an assertion in which I have never been able to see any truth, but it is an assertion that has many supporters even among men, and George Gissing, Dickens's most able critic, went so far as to say that "to-day the women must be very few who by deliberate choice open a volume of his works." This extraordinary sentence was written and printed before the Dickens Fellowship existed to give it the lie. To readers of *The Dickensian* it can be scarcely necessary to produce evidence showing how absurd this conclusion of Gissing's is. The Fellowship has enrolled more than 12,000 members, and we are pretty safe in saying that quite 7,000 of those are women. The first Dickens Society in the world—the All Around Dickens Club, in Boston, U.S.A.—was started by a woman, and to-day only women are admitted to active membership, and it is a fact that quite 70 per cent. of those who enter for Dickens prize competitions are women.

All these things, however, dispose of what is after all only a minor question. The main point remains—was Dickens unjust to women? I have no hesitation in answering that question with an emphatic "No." To support my position with argument is not an easy matter, for, after all, it can only resolve itself into a matter of opinion. But I submit what I fancy will be acknowledged to be a fair and reasonable proposition—if Dickens was consistently unjust to women, it must follow that he had a poor and distorted opinion of the sex. Had he? In *A Tale of Two Cities* he writes of "Those unselfish creatures—found only among women—who will, for pure love of admiration, bind themselves willing slaves to youth when they have lost it, to beauty that they never had, to accomplishments that they were never fortunate enough to gain, to bright hopes that never shone upon their own sombre lives." He tells us in *The Pickwick Papers* that Gabriel Grub "knew that women, the tenderest and most fragile of all God's creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress, and he saw that it was because they bore in their own hearts an inexhaustible well-spring of affection and devotion." And in *Martin Chuzzlewit* we find the following:—"O woman, God-beloved in old Jerusalem! The best among us need deal lightly with thy faults, if only for the punishment thy nature will endure, in bearing heavy evidence against us, on the Day of Judgment!" These are not remarks put into the mouths of characters, they are sentiments of his own, and so, full of weight. If we turn to his characters we find Tom Pinch saying—"You women are so kind, and in your kindness have such wise perception; you know so well how to be affectionate and full of solicitude without appearing to be; your gentleness of feeling is like your touch—so light and easy that

the one enables you to deal with wounds of the mind as tenderly as the other enables you to deal with wounds of the body." And if Gabriel Varden does tell us, "I didn't say I understood her. I wouldn't have the presumption to say that of any woman"—well,



KATE NICKLEBY SITTING FOR HER PORTRAIT

Drawn by Frank Stone, A.R.A., for the set of extra plates published in 1848 to illustrate the First Cheap Edition of the book

surely he is only drawing the line at exactly the same place as all men draw it!

Now, let us glance at some of his characters. Mrs. Baillie-Saunders says that the criticism with which we are dealing generally

comes from women—and from young women who "always assume that you know that they mean only Dickens's young and pretty women, that you take for granted, by a sort of mutual understanding, that they mean Dora Spenlow, Amy Dorrit, Kate Nickleby, Florence Dombey, Bella Wilfer, Rosa Budd, Pet Meagles, etc." My own experience is, that when these critics are asked for examples in support of their assertions, they usually name two widely different characters—probably Mrs. Nickleby and Mrs. Gargery. Now, there can be only one argument. These critics are almost unanimous in overlooking the one great fact that *all* Dickens's characters—men, women and children—are no more than *types*. Dickens did not give us Pickwick and leave him, alone, as an embodiment of his idea of a man. That is proved by the fact that he drew for us hundreds of other male characters. Pickwick is a gentleman; but so is John Jarndyce, and so is Ham Peggotty. Sampson Brass is a villain, but so is Quilp. The point is that all are *types*, and this applies equally to his women characters. And the criticism is the more difficult to understand when we remember that the qualities that Dickens exalted above all things in his women characters were gentleness, trustfulness, humanity and sympathy—things which, according to my lights, at any rate, are summed up in the one word—womanliness. In all his good women we find this—from Barbara to Bella Wilfer. If we take even Dora Spenlow, we find in her exactly these qualities. If we admit that a trusting dependence on some good man is a weakness, then practically all Dickens's women characters are weak. But remember that Dickens was regarding woman from a man's point of view, and, argue as much as we like, we can never get away from the fact that in all honourable men there is a chivalry towards the weaker sex, and that it is this very trustfulness in a woman that draws out a man's best qualities.

Going back again, however, to the main point—that Dickens's women are no more than types, shall we take Mrs. Nickleby first of all? I can scarcely ask the ladies to agree with me when I assert that Mrs. Nickleby is a type of a very common class of women, but I fancy that we all have met her—the women of fairly good breeding, little education, and little intelligence. Mrs. Nickleby is well meaning; no woman could have a truer love for her children; she has the best of intentions in everything she says and does; but, as Gissing puts it, unhappily she "has been born with the intellectual equipment of a Somerset ewe." She seems to be incapable of talking sensibly on any subject under the sun. She has an objectionable habit of interjecting remarks which are quite irrelevant to the matter in hand. She rambles on in the most absurd, not to say irritating way, remembering such-and-such an incident which happened thirty years ago, by the fact that on that very day she drove out in a new carriage, which she particularly remembers because its wheels, which were round, were painted yellow, and had spokes. I am not going to suggest that a Mrs. Nickleby is to be found in every other home, but I am quite certain that nine out of every ten of us have met the type.

But note that even this character has the redeeming features of love for the memory of her late husband and love for her children. Undoubtedly the creation of Mrs. Nickleby does not establish the fact that Dickens was unjust to women.

Of Dora Spenlow only a few words. Is it worth our while seriously to tackle such an absurd assertion as that her creation was an injustice to women? Silly, childish?—of course she was, but what of that? Can we regard her seriously as a "woman character"? Can we think of her as anything more than David's "child-wife," as the tender little blossom—a sweet little flower that only just blossomed and then faded? Are there many among us who will say they have never met a Mrs. Varden—the woman, who as a child was probably an only child, who from girlhood has been used to having her own way? I fancy that she is only her own daughter Dolly arrived at maturity, for make no mistake about it, Dolly did not make Joe Willet a loving, helpful wife. She is a spoiled child, who has not known what it is to be thwarted in any desire—a bright, pleasant, pretty girl whose rule of life is selfishness—in short, a coquette, a flirt. On one occasion she says, "To make one's sweetheart miserable is well enough and quite right, but to be made miserable one's self is a little too much!" That absolutely sums up her whole character, and if it does not sum up the character of a terribly large number of young girls to-day, then I have developed in me a surprising faculty of incorrect observation. It is a fact palpable to everyone of us that such girls are common. That being admitted, and it being borne in mind that Dolly Varden is merely an example of that type of girl, and not of the sex generally, then Dickens was not unjust to women when he created her. And if that be agreed, and if it be agreed that Mrs. Varden is only a later edition of her daughter Dolly, then Dickens was not unjust to women when he drew her.

Mrs. Gummidge—have we not met the man and woman who, having been visited by trouble, imagine that no trouble ever was, is, or can be so great as theirs, and never cease to moan, making everybody about them miserable? Mrs. Gummidge is no more than a type of a class of women—and men—that does exist.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE DROOD BOOKMAN

THE March number of "The Bookman" was of very special interest to Dickensians, for it was a special "Edwin Drood" number. The chief feature was a lengthy and deeply interesting article by Mr. B. W. Matz, in which he dealt critically with the book itself, told the history of attempts to solve the mystery, and of the discussions arising therefrom, and touched upon the topography of the book. The article was copiously illustrated, not only from topographical photographs by Messrs. T. W. Tyrrell and W. Dexter, but with reproductions of illustrations to the novel, and to various "completions." It also contained a portrait of the Editor of *The Dickensian*, and a presentation plate—a portrait of Dickens never before published: one of the best portraits we have seen. "Old Fleet."

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XL

ON HIS "MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD"

STRANGELY significant the half-told history,
Uncomprehended prophecy of pain;
Life's dream within a dream, death's awful mystery,
That evermore a secret must remain.

Faith's waning surely doth its page prefigure,
The Upas-unbelief of years to come;
The magic pen, in its full strength and rigour,
Points upward, ere down-dropt for ever dumb.

A choral strain of calm breathes, underlying
All jarring sounds of sorrow, sin, or strife;
The well-known voice in trumpet tones undying,
Speaks of the resurrection and the life.

Closed is the door. O fatal premonition!
How shall the mystery be solved, and where?
By the unfinished page an angel vision
Stands; and with hand uplifted answers, "There!"

M. PERCIVALE.

From *Society*, June 29th, 1881.

THE "SARACEN'S HEAD," SNOW HILL

By LOUISE PHILLIPS

WHAT lover of Charles Dickens can look upon this picture of that famous old coaching inn, the "Saracen's Head," Snow Hill, without recalling the vivid description of it in *Nicholas Nickleby* as it appeared upon that eventful day when the confiding young Nicholas, leaving his gentle mother and sister, joined the wily hypocrite Squeers, to go with him as assistant master down to that famous hall of learning, "Dotheboy's Hall," in Yorkshire?

"Snow Hill," writes Dickens, "the name is such a good one; Snow Hill, too, coupled with a 'Saracen's Head,' picturing to us, by a double association of ideas, something stern and rugged.

"Just on that particular part of Snow Hill where omnibus horses going eastward seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westward not unfrequently fall by accident, is the coach-yard of the 'Saracen's Head Inn' . . . You will see the booking office on the left, and the tower of St. Sepulchre's Church darting abruptly up into the sky on your right, and a gallery of bedrooms on both sides. Just before you, you will observe a long window with the words 'Coffee Room' legibly painted above it; and looking out of that window, you would have seen, had you gone at the right time, Mr. Wackford Squeers with his hands in his pockets."

At the time Mr. Dickens was gathering the material for *Nicholas Nickleby*—at least the year in which it was published—this famous

old inn was kept by my father, Mr. Francis Knowles, who left London for New York City late in that same year. I can recall my mother's delight upon reading that famous book. "I remember Mr. Dickens very well," she would say, "a merry gentleman, fond of his joke; I was told he was a play-actor!" Then she would describe the secret passages, in the cellar, which was supposed for some time to be haunted by a tall spectre wrapped in a winding sheet, but which was afterwards discovered by my mother to be one of the kitchen-maids, who took this way of meeting her sweetheart

THE "SARACEN'S HEAD," 1855

From a Drawing by T. H. Shepherd

without interference. If Mr. Dickens could have known of this incident, he might have woven it into the story, for he was fond of the mysterious.

I have some old plates of an odd shape and a peculiar colour that were used in this old inn; also some large napkins and a few pieces of silver.

The "Saracen's Head" was pulled down in 1868 for the improvements; when the valley was bridged over by the Holborn Viaduct, the part of the road where the old inn stood was named Skinner Street. There is a "Saracen's Head" to-day which stands actually on a part of the old coach yard, but it of course dates only from the alterations.

The picture illustrating this article is from a drawing by T. H. Shepherd, made in 1855, in the Crace Collection at the British Museum.

LAST WORDS ON THE DROOD MYSTERY

I

By WILLOUGHBY MATCHETT

MR. CUMING WALTERS *may* be right in his contention *re* Drood. Apart from the inherent extravagance of the idea, his case is certainly a strong one. But the inherent extravagance is the essential point of the whole matter. If Dickens was guilty of that, then, indeed, alack and alas! If Helena was really Datchery, one could only gasp in wonder that after thirty years of sweet reasonableness Dickens could bring himself to pen such outrageous nonsense, that he could ruin such a finely-wrought theme by the inclusion of an idea that would scarce pass muster in a "screaming absurdity" of the stage. Helena could only have been Datchery in life on the supposition that everybody she came in contact with was a born idiot.

It is useless to argue that women do occasionally in this country pass as men. Presumably they don't do it in small towns where they are marked identities. That first. Secondly, *young* women never pass as *elderly* men; the thing seems a sheer impossibility. Thirdly, they have white skins. Fourthly, they generally have sturdy frames, masculine features, and deep voices. Helena had none of these attributes. Even her brother—had his skin been white—could scarce have passed for Datchery, for it is said of him he had "the build of a girl."

Mr. Walters *may* be right in his view of the part Datchery was to play in the theme; but I would point out that his ideas of the buffer enacting the hero, risking his life hourly, sacrificing himself in the cause of Edwin Drood, etc., are purely gratuitous; there is not a tittle of evidence in their support. In setting forth the Bazzard theory, I have not imagined that he was going to play any such part, but rather—whatever his ambitions may have been—by some useful detective work, to pave the way for others. It is to Tartar that Forster assigns the task of unmasking Jasper; there is not a word of Datchery doing anything specially wonderful. When we recall the fact that Forster had the inestimable privilege of hearing Dickens himself render Datchery (for the novelist read him the part in which the buffer appeared) it is inconceivable that Forster should not have asked who he was. Had Dickens refused to tell him, here was food for thought indeed. But nothing struck Forster. We know how Dickens threw himself into such readings (he had done Honeythunder "with overflowing humour"); it is inconceivable, then, had Helena been Datchery, that he should not have given some feminine touches to his rendering, and thrown such meaning points into his tones as would have aroused Forster's suspicions. But no; Forster had not a glimmering that Datchery was a woman, had not a glimmering that he was the Avenger. The assumption is merely referred to by him as one of the "incidents leading on to the catastrophe." In all probability he *knew* who Datchery was, and considered it so obvious a fact that he did not think it worth mentioning.

The chief *raison d'être* of Bazzard has seemed to me to have been his probable recognition of the ring in the tomb, just as the *raison*

d'être of Wopsle (to whom Mr. Walters draws a parallel) was his recognition of Compeyson in the shadower of Pip, a striking incident that helped to lead on to the catastrophe. Not that I think Bazzard was a twin-brother of Wopsle; far from it. I think that Dickens meant to portray a perfectly fresh and original sort of character. The term with which Bazzard's name is first introduced into the tale, "a particularly angular clerk," seems to me to define the author's idea of him far better than Mr. Walter's imaginary "pretentious humbug." To strike this note of "particularly angular" at the very outset, and to make it apply to both master and man, was to show that, whatever the oddity of their relationship, it was going to be a close one, and that he meant them to work together towards a common end.

The whole airy fabric of Mr. Walters's theory seems to me to be founded on a fundamental misconception of Dickens's statements about his story. Mr. Walters blindly reads Datchery into them all, whereas it was solely a subsidiary idea. "I laid aside the fancy I told you of, and have a very curious and new idea for my new story, etc." Obviously Dickens was here speaking in the first flush of his enthusiasm for the germ-idea of his story in all its bare simplicity. Again, "There is a curious interest steadily working up to No. 5, which requires a great deal of art and self-denial." Now the Datchery interest cannot be said to have any existence until Drood has disappeared. What *does* work up from the start is Jasper's secret passion for Rosa, of which he has to make her aware without an uttered word, and the full effects of which in his action the reader has to grasp without being actually told—good reasons both for a good deal of art and self-denial. This *does* culminate in No. 5 in a dramatic scene of open and passionate avowal.

Mr. Walters *may* be right, but the probabilities are that he is not.

II

By W. A. FRASER

More than twenty years of close study of this remarkable story has convinced me of the absolute impossibility of Helena Landless playing the part of the "idle old buffer living on his means."

It was a *physical* impossibility for a young girl—slight, graceful, and of the gypsy type—to personate a short, stout, elderly man. Not only would it have been essential for her to make-up her face and hands, but also her figure, and her voice would have at once betrayed her, and her appearance in the "thick shock" of white hair would have been so extraordinary that even in quiet, sleepy Cloisterham she would have been followed by a crowd wherever she went. There is a vast difference between the stage of a theatre and the streets of a country town, however quiet it may be. It is amazing to me that Mr. Cuming Walters does not perceive this. Dickens, who loved the stage, knew well what *can* and what can *not* be done with make-up in gaslight and daylight. Apart from this, there is the mental impossibility to be considered. In the last lines Dickens wrote before he laid down his pen for ever, he makes Datchery talk in a strain which Helena Landless could not by any stretch of possibility attain to. What could she know of public-houses and their

manners and customs? The idea is monstrous in its absurdity, and disposes, once for all, of the Helena Landless theory.

Mr. Cuming Walters does not "like the Bazzard-Datchery idea," but, with all due respect to him, when I remember Mr. Nadgett and Mr. Guppy, I begin to think more favourably of Mr. Bazzard's claims to the part of Datchery than I did at one time. In the pages of the *Cambridge Review* I expressed grave doubts of his power to play the part; but I have reconsidered the matter since then, and I admit that I owe a debt to Mr. Edwin Charles and Mr. Willoughby Matchett for their very clear and almost convincing advocacy of Bazzard's assumption of the character. I should very much like to hear the "far better case" Mr. Cuming Walters could make out for Tartar! What posible motive had he for assuming the disguise of an old "buffer," and "loafing" about Cloisterham? for, be it observed, Tartar had not met Rosa when Datchery first appears on the scene. It is inconceivable that a complete stranger, for no reason whatever, should play the detective upon Jasper. Given a motive, Tartar *could* have played the part as "round as a ring."

III

By FRANCIS STUDLEY

I am glad to find that many of the most thoughtful students of Dickens's unfinished book are agreed in the opinion at which I arrived many years ago, viz., that Drood was really murdered. But I have no desire to discuss the question of the identity of Datchery, for this has always appeared to me a matter of secondary importance. Doubtless it is a very fascinating and interesting subject of speculation; and it is one which has served a good many ingenious theorists as a sort of brick wall to knock their heads against. But it is not the "Mystery of Edwin Drood."

The mystery is that which was divulged in confidence by the author to his "guide, philosopher, and friend," Forster—the "incommunicable idea," he calls it; meaning obviously incommunicable to his readers at an early stage, otherwise, as he says, "the interest of the book would be gone." The idea, "a strong one, though difficult to work," is gradually to unfold and develop itself as the story proceeds. And a very curious idea it really is—new in fiction so far as I know, and assuredly one which Dickens himself had never used before—"the originality of which was to consist in the review of the murderer's career by himself at the close, when its temptations were to be dwelt upon as if, not he, the culprit, but some other man, were the tempted." His wickedness is all to be "elaborately elicited from him as if told of another." Here, it seems to me, is the real "Mystery." As Mr. Matchett justly remarks, *Edwin Drood* is an opium story, and the author, having studied the effect of the drug (as in the case of De Quincey) upon a good man, set himself to describe its effect upon a murderous villain. So the criminal Jasper, under its influence, details to the vigilant Datchery the whole frightful story—his jealous hatred of his nephew, his efforts to fasten suspicion upon Neville, his collecting the quicklime and opening the vault, his strangling of the lad with a silk scarf, his casting of the body into the vault, and his disposal of the watch and chain. All

this, amid the mental horrors and diseased imaginings which possess and torture his opium-soddened brain, is to be related and "dwelt upon, as if told of another"; the vault is to be opened, the diamond ring found and identified by Grewgious, Jasper's guilt is proved, and the wretched man finds himself at last in the "condemned cell" (where, I may parenthetically remind those who still hold that Drood is living, he could not possibly be except under sentence of death for murder). So singular an idea is this, that I think to work it out completely would have exercised the author's best powers, and had he lived to complete the work with his old convincing force, it would have proved that although physically he had become sadly weakened, his imaginative gifts remained unimpaired.

IV

By G. FOREST

Whatever poor Bazzard might have turned out to be, I am afraid Mr. Cuming Walters is rather too hard on him. He gives him some very harsh names, and will not have him as a candidate for Datchery honours at any price, for he is "precipitated into the story too late, and is an afterthought." He also says it is "against the canons of art to introduce a belated character" for an important part. But Nadgett is "precipitated" into the story of *Martin Chuzzlewit* at a very much later period, for we do not hear of him at all until we are more than halfway through the book, although we have long been aware of the criminal designs of Jonas. Nadgett at first cuts a very unpromising figure, yet it is he that hunts Jonas down, and he plays a highly important part during the second half of the book. Mr. Cuming Walters likens Bazzard to Wopsle, and, by the way, Mr. Proctor, in "Watched by the Dead," likens Bazzard (whom he calls a "fool"), oddly enough, to Silas Wegg, who certainly was no fool, but an exceedingly clever knave. And it seems to me that Bazzard resembles Nadgett quite as much as he resembles either Wopsle or Wegg.

V

By J. C. L. CLARK, of Lancaster (U.S.A.)

To many Dickensians the Drood question has willy-nilly taken its place among the serious mysteries of life. Its answer is sought with something of the same fervour with which the S.P.R. pursues its phantoms. We read the accumulating articles and monographs, and evermore come out at the same door wherein we went. Speaking for myself, the phrase of the baffled Persian poet has singular appropriateness. On my first reading of *Drood* I accepted Datchery without question as Bazzard in disguise, nor have I ever ceased to cherish a sneaking *penchant* for the Bazzard theory. Emboldened now by Mr. Matchett's article in your January number, I declare openly that I believe Datchery was Bazzard, and that Dickens tacitly admitted the fact from the start. Why shouldn't he? His subject was not the mystery of Datchery, but of Edwin Drood—*i.e.*, if he were living or dead, and, if living, where and under what circumstances. Datchery (or Bazzard) is merely one of a group of amateur detectives who are to unmask Jasper as at least a would-be murderer; the question of his identity is merely by-play.

I wonder if it has been noted in print that in the rejected chapter, published by Forster, the young investigator who in Dickens' matured plan gave place to the elderly buffer, employs the same mode of expression which in the book was assigned to Mrs. Billickin, "the widowed cousin, divers times removed, of Mr. Bazzard's." The youthful stranger addressed Mr. Sapsea thus: "If I was to deny that I came to this town to see and hear you, sir, what would it avail me?" Almost the first word spoken by Billickin gives the key to her conversational tone—"I will not deceive you; far from it. I have apartments available." This coincidence is perhaps of no significance, except that it may show that Datchery's peculiarities were not of such vital import but that they might be readily altered, or transferred to another minor character. To go a step further, could Dickens ever have contemplated sending either Edwin or Helena down to Cloisterham incognito as a *young* man? Either would probably have been recognised by the bystanders as he or she (even without skirts) emerged from the railway carriage.

Turning for a moment to the real mystery, we know from Charles Collins's cover picture that John Jasper is to be confronted by some one—presumably in the image and likeness of Edwin Drood—when he revisits the vault. For the half-crazed and fearful Drood a masquerader would do; but would not the effect upon the reader be weakened if the accusing figure turns out to be not Drood at all, but Miss Landless, or Bazzard, or somebody else, made up for the part? In that case the mystery regarding Drood's fate would after all have been solved all along—he was murdered just as the author led us to suppose, and only Cloisterham and the newspapers would learn for the first time who the murderer was. Dickens's apparent admissions to his son, to Mr. Fildes and to John Forster need not, I think, be taken too seriously—as who should say, "Of course he is dead, Jasper strangled him—haven't you read the story?" What obligation was there upon the novelist to give the show away even to his intimates?

VI

By GEORGE F. GADD

By summing up the best points of previous solutionists, Mr. Charles makes out a very plausible case, but I should like to draw his attention to certain possible oversights in his deductions which are of some importance.

Jasper is assumed to convey the dead body of Drood from his rooms to the Sapsea vault. This act, so full of danger, with the Topes close by, and with a difficult flight of stairs to negociate, seems to me inconceivable as part of the crafty Jasper's schemes. Has Mr. Charles overlooked the significance of the tower motive in this story? The book opens with a reference to the tower. The first chapter closes with another. All through the work it is suggested, and, like Mr. Datchery, the reader is "warm when he sees the tower, and cold when he does not see it." Durdles and Jasper ascend for a reason which is subtle, since Durdles' haunt is the crypt. Jasper, in his opium trance cries, "Look down! Look down! You see what lies at the bottom there."

I imagine that Jasper lures Drood to the top of the tower, where a

cry, even on a quiet night, might not be clearly heard. He strangles him, and then, to make doubly sure, as well as to save trouble and danger, topples the body over into that "stillest part" where the tomb awaits it.

My second note concerns the discovery of the ring. Mr. Charles assumes that Durdles has had possession of the vault key since the incident in Chapter IV. Surely this is erroneous. The stonemason's work done, the key would be at once returned to the owner, and locked away, the probability being, according to Jasper's calculations, that it would not be needed again until Mr. Sapsea's death. Here lies Jasper's real security.

Herein consists his ingenuity.

VII

By J. W. WILSON

Was John Jasper a mesmerist? is the idea which suggested itself to me when, while reading *Edwin Drood* in numbers, on its first appearance in 1870, I came to the illustration "Jasper's Sacrifices" and its accompanying description. The term "Mesmerism" is used, although it is old-fashioned, because it was in common use at that period. Let us see whether Jasper possessed this terrible power in addition to his other evil gifts.

When he is first mentioned in the story (Chapter II.) as meeting Edwin, "Once for all a look of intentness and intensity—a look of hungry, exacting, watchful, and yet devoted affection—is always, *now and ever afterwards*, on the Jasper face whenever the Jasper face is addressed in this direction. And, whenever it is so addressed, it is never, on this occasion or on any other, dividedly addressed; *it is always concentrated.*"

And, at the close of the same chapter, "He remains in that attitude—as if in a kind of fascination attendant on his strong interest in the youthful spirit."

Again (Chapter VII.) while Rosa is singing to Jasper's accompaniment, as he "watched the pretty lips, and ever and again hinted the one note, as though it were a low whisper from himself, the voice became less steady, until all at once the singer broke into a burst of tears, and shrieked out, *with her hands over her eyes*, 'I can't bear this! I am frightened! Take me away!'"

Edwin says to Jasper: "I believe you make her afraid of you. No wonder."

"No wonder," repeated Helena. Edwin tells Rosa that Jasper didn't like being called "the monster" who frightened her, "But she answered never a word, and shivered, as if they had made her a little too cold." And the same night, when talking to Helena, Rosa says: "He terrifies me. He haunts my thoughts like a dreadful ghost. I feel I am never safe from him. I feel as if he could pass in through the wall when he is spoken of." "He has made a slave of me with his looks. He has forced me to understand him without his uttering a threat." "He pursues me as a lover, commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them." "He seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream, in which he threatens most," etc.

Again (Chapter VIII.), when Jasper is breeding dissension between Edwin and Neville he looks from one to the other for their retorts, and his "play of eyes between the two holds good—to the end."

Again (Chapter XII.), when Jasper and Durdles are watching Neville a sense of destructive power is so expressed in Jasper's face that even Durdles pauses and looks at him."

Now consider Chapter XIX., when Jasper calls to see Rosa in the garden, "the old horrible feeling of being compelled by him asserts its hold upon her. She feels that she would even then go back, but that he draws her feet towards him. She cannot resist. She looks at him with the expression of the instant frozen on her face," and so on throughout the interview, until Jasper throws before her his fidelity to his boy, his wasted life, his peace, his despair, and so on, "*with an action of his hands* (such as a mesmerist uses) as though he cast down something precious," well depicted in this remarkable illustration of "Jasper's Sacrifices."

After this terrible interview poor Rosa had the feeling so strong upon her, "the feeling of not being safe from him, and of the solid walls of the old convent being powerless to keep out his ghostly following of her, that no reasoning of her own could calm her terrors. She felt as if he had power to bind her by a spell."

No wonder she could come to no other conclusion than that he was a terrible man, and must be fled from. He was one of the most terrible characters ever depicted even by the Master himself; and if it was to have appeared, in the development of this wonderful story, that John Jasper, in addition to all else, could summon to his aid, in the carrying out of his diabolical schemes, that mysterious power called "Mesmerism," the passages I have quoted, and many others which may be found in the pages of *Edwin Drood*, will surely appear as "Confirmation strong as Holy Writ.'

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking, don't it?"—Rosa Dartle.

QUESTIONS

Wilkie Collins and "Drood."—Can any reader of *The Dickensian* tell me whether the "End of Edwin Drood," written by Wilkie Collins, can still be bought, and, if so, who is the publisher?—J. E. H.

Dickens Poem Wanted.—Can any reader say where and when a poem on Dickens appeared in which the two following lines formed part:—

"The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower,
Unfinished must remain"?

It probably appeared in an American paper shortly after Dickens's death.—Henry Leffman.

The Great Baby.—The *Yorkshire Evening Post* of the 10th March reprinted a large portion of an article entitled as above, from *Household Words* of August, 1855, attributing it to Dickens. Will you please say whether this assumption is well founded?—F. G. Jackson.

The Visionary Man.—In which novel can I find reference to the "Visionary Man," *i.e.*, description of a man who planned affairs so fast that he was accounted by the world as a dreamer?—L. H. Wilson.

ANSWERS

Wilkie Collins and Drood.—Wilkie Collins did not write a completion of "Edwin Drood." "John Jasper's Secret," which is stated to be by Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens the younger, is still to be obtained in America. But neither of these authors wrote any portion of the book. —[Ed.]

The Great Baby.—This is one of the recently-discovered articles of Dickens, and appears in the volumes of "Miscellaneous Papers" just added to the "National" Edition of Dickens's works.—Editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONVIVIALISM IN DICKENS

Sir,—In the *Alliance News* of December 19th last there is an article by John Madder, M.D., of Portland, Oregon, quoted from the American *Journal of Inebriety*. He writes: "There is no doubt that he (Dickens) was a convivialist, no doubt that he was fond in no ordinary degree of the good things of the table, both as to meat and drink. His pages are literally filled with good cheer, with the eating of kidney pies, beef-steak pies, pork pies, with tripe, with stews of all sorts; such gastronomic horrors as might well be calculated to give one of less vigorous habits and digestion a chill of dyspeptic nightmare, fright were his chief delight. No wonder he found relief in walks of from ten to twenty miles in length! A vast amount of physical activity must have been necessary to make such diet bearable. We do not need, however, to get at Dickens's convivialism through inference. In his *American Notes* almost on the first page we find the following: 'I have not inquired among my medical acquaintance whether turtle and cold punch, with hock, champagne, and claret, and all the slight etcetera usually included in an unlimited order for a good dinner, are peculiarly calculated to suffer a sea change.'"

Then, later on, Dr. Madden writes: "There is still another consideration that presents itself to us in connection with Dickens's convivialism. Was any part of his wonderful imagination influenced by alcohol? Were the grotesque shapes, scenes, language—the hundred-and-one eccentricities of the Dickens times, places, and people—in any degree the result of alcoholic indulgence? Surely we do not desire to insinuate anything which could be construed as a belief in habits of alcoholic excess, but only that many great writers have seemed to need their narcotic stimuli in order to be at their best. Tennyson, it is said, wrote his best poetry when he had a pipe filled with a certain kind of tobacco."

I quote at some considerable length, because I do not think it likely that my brother "Dickensians," at least the majority, are in the habit of regularly seeing either the *Alliance News* or the *Journal of Inebriety*.

Of course both these journals are Temperance organs, and therefore the abstemious habits of the great Novelist are naturally discussed. It may be my illiteracy, but I have never yet come across any reference whatsoever to the question raised by Dr. Madden of America. I write this letter, therefore, to obtain information. We are looking forward to Temperance legislation this year, and I, for one, should be glad to know what were the habits with reference to alcohol of my hero, so that I could explain to a friend. I think perhaps "Dickensians" are guilty of hero-worship, myself included; therefore we do not like to see anything in our excellent little magazine depreciating our hero. It is only natural. But if there is any reference to this point in question that any "Dickensian" knows of, I appeal to him (or her) to set it down on paper and send it to you for publication in *The*

Dickensian. I feel that a clear, outspoken statement with reference to Dickens's abstemious habits would greatly benefit the society by explaining to the world at large that we are not fanatic hero-worshippers, but true lovers and admirers of a great novelist and friend who was human, and therefore had his faults.

I am, yours faithfully,

London, March 16th, 1908. IVOR P. NICHOLSON.

DICKENS AND THE "DANGER" SIGNAL

SIR,—The concluding sentence of Chapter IX., Book III., in *Our Mutual Friend* reads as follows:—

"Something to this purpose surely mingled with the blast of the train as it cleared the stations, all knowingly shutting up their green eyes and opening their red ones when they prepared to let the boofer lady pass."

Did the signals at the time that this was written show a *red* light up for "line clear," as the sentence suggests, or was Dickens under a misapprehension? I do not know if this has been noted in your pages before, but it seems to me to be of some interest.

Yours faithfully,

GEO. W. HAWKINS.

DICKENS AS AN ARTIST

SIR,—In reference to the extraordinary article of American origin which you print in the March number, please allow me to state a few patent facts. The article is to the effect that an American, a perfect stranger, called on Dickens in 1849, with a letter of introduction from Forster. Dickens at once took this person into his confidence and told "this perfect stranger" of his wretched boyhood, his early literary aspirations, his disappointments in disposing of his youthful productions, and his present difficulties in drawing a lucid picture with words of the characters that lay in his brain. We are further told that, taking up a quill pen, he roughly sketched the figures from *David Copperfield* which are reproduced in the article.

He appears to have given this American stranger a confidence which he kept from his most intimate friends. It seems also that Dickens had concealed his power of draughtsmanship from all except this interviewer. Surely Dickens could have helped his artists considerably had he not kept this gift a secret. But please turn to Fred Barnard's illustrations in the Household Edition of Dickens's works, drawn and published some years after the novelist's death. Compare this rough sketch of the head of Mr. Dick with the Barnard illustration on page 433, and observe the position of hat and bow on hatband. Compare the rough sketch of Mr. Peggotty with the figure of the same on page 49, and observe position of hands, hat, head, and feet. Turn to page 249 and compare illustration with the rough sketch of Uriah Heep. Observe position of hands, coat collar, lines on face, and the few raised-up hairs on front of head. Compare Mr. and Mrs. Micawber with illustration on page 73. Observe the two children and suggestion of frills on apron. Mr. Micawber is only different in the position of his walking-cane. It must, indeed, have been a precious souvenir which the guileless American stranger took away with him that night in November, 1849.

America is a great nation, and has produced some wonderful discoveries. Surely this Dickensian item is among the greatest of them!

I am, yours truly,

Leeds, FRANK KIDSON.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

NOTICE TO SECRETARIES.

Reports of meetings should reach the Editor by the 18th of each month to ensure insertion. But it will be a matter of GREAT CONVENIENCE *if Secretaries will send their reports immediately after the meetings have been held, and not wait until the time limit. Address c/o Publishers.*

LONDON.—At the Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, on March 4th, Mr. B. W. Matz gave his lecture on "The Newly Discovered Writings of Charles Dickens." The chairman was Mr. Arthur Waugh. Those who were present were provided with an enjoyable evening. Mr. Matz told how all the writings had been traced, and though he said some of the articles were necessarily of a somewhat ephemeral nature, nevertheless they were all illumined in some degree by the genius of the writer. They revealed Dickens the Man, the friend to the downcast and poor, the foe of shams and hypocrisy, the children's advocate. They dealt with all sorts of subjects—with Education, Religion, Politics, Capital Punishment, Betting, Manners and Customs, Red Tape, Vegetarianism, Spiritualism, Temperance and Drunkenness, the Stage, Literature and Art, etc., and often they contained little autobiographical touches, or allusions to characters in his own books. Mr. Matz showed how Dickens believed in Education as the first step in Social reform, and in the better housing of the poor as the second step; how little sympathy he would have had with the Education squabbles of to-day; how he announced himself as unequivocally in favour of the total abolition of capital punishment; how at the time of the Great Preston Railway Strike he advocated exactly the course that Mr. Lloyd George took recently; how he ridiculed such people as Mrs. Bloomer; and how in everything he urged moderation and toleration, and so on. Finally, Mr. Matz claimed that henceforth these writings must take their place as a part of the great scheme of the novelist's work, and that no estimate of his place in the literary world could in future be made without taking them into consideration. A short discussion led by the chairman, followed, and at the close both Mr. Matz and Mr. Waugh were warmly thanked for their kindness.—"OLD FLEET."

CHARITABLE AND NEEDLEWORK GUILD.—The guild will hold its second annual social dance on Thursday, April 30th, at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, E.C., at 7.30 p.m. Double tickets, 4s. 6d.; single, 2s. 6d. (all including refreshments), are now ready, and may be obtained from the Hon. Sec. of the Guild, Miss E. M. Miniken, or the Hon. Gen. Sec., Mr. J. W. T. Ley, at head-quarters, Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, W.C. Our last dance was well attended, and, according to all, very enjoyable. The Committee hope that members will endeavour to make this a greater success than before.

BRIGHTON.—The Mayor of Brighton, Alderman J. Slingsby Roberts, presided over the meeting held on March 7th, 1908, when a paper on *Little Dorrit* was read by the President, Mr. Henry Davey, who described the book as the least successful and least known of all Dickens's novels. Its main defect, he said, was not the multiplicity of characters, but want of connected interest, and such obscurity in the plot that one does not much care to know what the secret is, while, when we are finally informed, it is told in such a curiously involved manner that one is doubtful as to what really happened. The plot is often neglected for the characters, and sometimes the characters for the plot. It is badly constructed. But there are some splendid details, humorous and descriptive. Only a very few phrases have become common property, the principal being the Circumlocution Office and Mrs. General's phrase "Prunes and Prisms." Appropriate

selections were excellently rendered by Miss May Summer, Miss Mabel Harbour, and Mr. W. E. Fowler.

BRIXTON.—On the 19th ult. "The Little Dorrit Society," under new leadership, with Mrs. Sherlock as Secretary, renewed its meetings in that lady's residence at Dulwich, and a large party of ladies assembled to ply needle and scissors in making such articles of fancy and garments for use as will in the winter season produce by sale the necessary funds for giving coals to deserving poor folk.

A first-rate entertainment, literary and musical, was provided on Monday, March 16th, at the usual place and hour of meeting, the evening's programme being arranged by Miss E. Cooper. The chair was occupied by Mr. Sidney Marriott. Musical selections, vocal and instrumental, were predominant, and the claims of the "heavenly maid" received honours due at the expert hands and voices of Miss Cooper (a brilliant pianiste), Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Bridel, and last—certainly not least—Mr. Scott. Three Dickensian readings were also given during the evening, as affording some variety to the prevailing harmony, viz.:—"Threatened hostilities between Mr. Winkle and Dr. Slammer," presented in two sections by Mr. R. J. Block; and "Ruth Pinch's beefsteak pudding," read by Mr. Robert Allbut. These were received with warm appreciation, and a cordial vote of thanks was awarded to the promoters of the entertainment.

CHESTER (U.S.A.).—The birthday celebrations took the form of a Banquet at the Imperial Hotel, on February 6th. The menu was most ingeniously arranged with Dickensian names to all the dishes, and a suitable quotation to each. An elaborate programme occupied the evening, comprising speeches, recitals, and songs; to each of these also was given an appropriate text from Dickens. It was a grand success, and reflected the utmost credit on all who were responsible for it. The branch has had some very successful meetings during the season. Mrs. E. S. Williamson, who is doing grand work for the Fellowship in Canada and America, gave an evening's entertainment with a recital of the *Carol*. Mr. Frank Speaight, who has been the guest of the energetic and busy Dickensian Secretary, Miss M. O'Neill, recited "Near by," his version of *David Copperfield*, whilst Mr. Bransby Williams has been entrancing everybody who was fortunate to hear and see him. Altogether Dickens lovers have had many opportunities of being pleased.

FOREST GATE.—On March 11th, Mr. B. W. Matz gave his Lantern Lecture, "A Chat about Dickens, and the Places in his Books." Mr. J. W. T. Ley acted as chairman.

GLOUCESTER.—The lecture on "Dickens and his Illustrators," which Mr. H. W. Bruton gave in the Northgate Mansions Assembly Room, was a conspicuous and most gratifying success from every point of view. After remarking that Dickens was exceptionally fortunate in having the assistance of so many clever artists as illustators of his works, Mr. Bruton chiefly referred to the most exacting requirements of the novelist, with whom the artist did not always have a particularly easy time. Commencing with the work of George Cruikshank, the lecturer then proceeded to describe a long series of illustrations, reproductions of which were thrown on the screen by the aid of Mr. Smart's lantern. Robert Seymour, Robert William Bass, Hablot Knight Browne, George Cattermole, the ever-popular John Leech, Frederick Barnard, and C. E. Brock were amongst the artists dealt with, and Mr. Bruton had something interesting to say about each, whilst to the striking examples of their work were added short readings of the author's descriptions of the characters and events depicted.

HALIFAX.—The inaugural meeting of this branch took place on February 27th, at St. Mary's School, with the Rev. J. Willis-Price in the chair. Mr. Price, in explaining the objects of the Fellowship, spoke on the general subject of Dickens, dwelling particularly on the humour of the novelist. Mr.

Ernest A. Jones (through whose instrumentality the branch was formed) explained how it had been brought about. Mr. F. Beken, of Luddenden, also assisted at the meeting by speaking of the success of his own branch. The following committee was formed :—Dr. Macaulay, Dr. Branson, Mr. F. Marshall, Mr. P. Kaye, Mrs. Shillito, and Miss Pattison. Mr. E. A. Jones was elected Hon. Secretary.

HAMILTON (CANADA).—The inaugural meeting of the branch took place on February 5th, when more than a hundred were enrolled. The meeting was an immense success from all points of view. During the evening Mr. E. S. Williamson, who gave every assistance in forming the branch, recited the trial scene from *Pickwick*, and Mrs. Frank Mackelcan sang several songs. Later in the evening the officers for the ensuing year were elected. Bishop Du Moulin was elected Hon. President, Mr. C. W. Bell, President, and Miss Coleman, Mrs. Sydney Dunn, Mr. G. C. Thomson, and Mr. George E. Bristol, Vice-Presidents; Mr. R. K. Hope, Treasurer, and Miss Tudor, Secretary. The Hamilton Branch starts off most auspiciously.

LEEDS.—This branch has had a series of monthly socials this, its sixth, session. At these, amateur talent was to the front. The items rendered were readings selected from the Novelist's works, songs and recitations, etc. On February 6th a grand whist drive and dance were held at the Conservative Club as a birthday celebration. One hundred and thirty-two guests were present, and all passed off with much spirit. On March 2nd the annual tea and treat to poor slum children was given. There were over 200 entertained, each boy being presented with a whip and top, and each girl with a doll. Over a hundred beautifully dressed dolls were provided by the ladies of the Fellowship and their friends.

LIVERPOOL.—On the anniversary of Dickens's birthday a hot pot supper and treat was given to upwards of 200 poor children in the parish of St. James's, Toxteth, and each child was given a toy to take away with them. Mr. Page kindly provided a gramophone entertainment, Mr. Murnaghon sang (the children joining in heartily, in answer to his request for a good chorus), and Miss Haydock accompanied. On the following day, February 8th, members held a most successful whist drive at the Edinburgh Café. The stewards were Mr. Jaggard and Mr. Johnson. Miss Helen Brinckman gave, on February 18th, her recital from our Editor's work, "Charles Dickens; his Life and Work," before a crowded attendance.

LUDDENDEN.—The monthly meeting was held on February 25th, in the old Warley Council Room. Councillor J. W. Gankroger (in the absence of the President) took the chair. There was a large attendance. Mr. W. Alderson was leader, and read an essay on *The Battle of Life*, giving as his reason for taking the same that it was short, and the whole story could be thrashed out. His paper was not so much a criticism on the work as a lucid outline of the tale. Several interesting portions were read in illustration of remarks. There was a lively discussion, and, in reply to it, Mr. Alderson then gave what criticisms he had to offer.

MANCHESTER.—At the March meeting a very enjoyable evening was spent in listening to Mr. J. Cuming Walters's paper on "Dickens's Ideal of Womanhood." Mr. Albert Nicholson presided. Mr. Walters traced, in a skilful manner, the gradual evolution in Dickens's mind of the true type of womanhood. He pointed out that in the early stages of his career as an author Dickens had no clear conception of a heroine at all, but with *Barnaby Rudge* there came indications of a change in his attitude of mind on this subject. Ultimately it was clear that the women of practical service and gracious ways were Dickens's perfect type, and in Agnes Wickfield was found his highest conception of true womanhood. The chairman, as well as Messrs. Bagot, Vaughan, and Harwood, took part in the subsequent discussion. The branch has contributed £3 to the Crimean Veterans' Association as a result of the Dickens Birthday Entertainment.

MANHATTAN.—This branch celebrated the birthday of Charles Dickens with a grand banquet on the evening of February 7th, at the rooms of the Aldine Association. Hon. President Govan held the chair, and presided over the sixty members and guests. The honorary guests were:—Will Carleton, the poet; Wm. Bayard Hale, LL.D., Editor of the *N.Y. Times Saturday Review of Books*; Col. Edwin T. Taliaferro, the noted Dickens lecturer; Hon. Alfred J. Boulton; Leslie Harris, the English monologist and pianist; and Frank Hindley, the tenor. The subject of all the speeches was, of course, Dickens—and eloquent, loving, glowing speeches they were, too. It is a peculiar thing that when a person gets up to speak of Dickens he becomes earnest and sincere, and full of reverence; or perhaps it is not so peculiar after all. Leslie Harris, who might have been a character in one of Dickens's books, emphatically gave the lie to Betsy Brig and several illustrations of types of Dickensian characters. Hon. President Govan told in his inimitable way—which is truly Dickensian—of his search for quiet lodgings in London, recommending one particular place, which need not be mentioned, for fear of embarrassing the good landlady.

MELBOURNE.—This branch still works smoothly and successfully, and is in a prosperous condition, particularly as regards talent, which is always forthcoming under the superintendence of Mr. W. A. Windas. Meetings are held every month, and are well patronised and appreciated. Mr. Smith, the new Secretary, is maintaining the high level set by his predecessor.

SHEFFIELD.—The branch had a genuine treat in the Montgomery Hall on February 18th, when Mr. William Miles, of London, gave his recital of *Dombey and Son*. Mr. Miles has a splendid voice, and possesses a face full of flexibility and expression. The subject he divided into two parts, the first dealing with the birth, childhood, and premature death of Paul, and the other relating to Mr. Dombey's second matrimonial venture. His portrayal of the scene in the death chamber was exceedingly fine, and the entire presentation of the incidents in little Paul's short career was striking and pathetic. Mr. Miles's Major Bagstock was a thing to be carried away. Mr. Dombey, Dr. Bimber, and the various ladies of uncertain summers but evergreen amatorial hopes, whom the great novelist introduced for the purposes of by-play, were represented in a way that afforded the large audience much delight. In the concluding part of the recital Mr. Miles was equally happy, extracting effectively the abounding humour, the deep pathos, and the faultless penetration of character which Dickens instilled into the work.

The members of the Dramatic Society attended on February 28th, in the Builders' Exchange, a most enjoyable ball organised by the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. T. H. Warskett. About sixty persons were present, and dancing was maintained from eight till one. The ball-room was tastefully decorated; Mr. Cecil Everett officiated as M.C., and Messrs. T. H. Warskett and S. D. Gent were the stewards.

SOUTHAMPTON.—The members spent a most enjoyable evening on March 16th. Some delightful songs were rendered by Mrs. R. Grinton, and Miss Roo. The Rev. W. A. C. Chevalier contributed the second part of his paper, "My Reminiscences of Charles Dickens' Readings." The Rev. R. Grimson gave a splendid reading of "The Death of Fagin," and Mr. A. C. Hallett one from *Great Expectations*. The Misses Tracy and Gadd ably presided at the piano.

STOCKPORT.—The annual Dickens birthday celebration took place in the Sunday-school on February 7th. In the absence of Mr. Helm, Mr. Hatfield took the chair, and gave a short address. In conclusion he recited Bret Harte's immortal tribute to Dickens, "Dickens in Camp." An excellent programme was provided, the following taking part:—Miss Ball, pianoforte solo; the Misses Marsland, Miss Wilkinson, Mr. Wood, Mr. Henshaw, songs; Miss Hulme, Mrs. Dawson, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Adams, Mr. Wilkinson, recitations. Miss Downs, L.L.M.C., ably accompanied.

TORONTO.—The success which has attended the Toronto Branch since its formation has placed it at the head, numerically, of the Fellowship throughout the world. At the costume banquet held on February 8th, this fact brought letters of congratulation from the President, Mr. Henry F. Dickens, K.C.; the Hon. General Secretary, Mr. J. W. T. Ley; and from the Hon. Secretary of the Sheffield Branch, who hitherto had claimed premier position for his branch. Every one will join us in congratulating Toronto on its enthusiasm, and wish more power to its elbow. It was a great night at which these facts were told to 400 members who assembled at Temple Buildings in costume to celebrate Dickens's birthday anniversary, and the function was a huge success. The characters were not only picturesque and attractive, but life-like and easily recognisable. The banquet was thoroughly enjoyed, and each member was given an artistic and appropriate menu. Mr. E. S. Williamson occupied the chair, and during the evening Mr. W. Sterling Battis, of Chicago, gave "Life Portraits from Dickens," whilst songs and other items filled in what was undoubtedly an immensely successful celebration. The branch also gave on February 22nd and 24th performances of "A Cricket on the Hearth" to crowded audiences, and so successful were they that the players have decided to compete for the trophy offered by the Governor of Canada at Ottawa.

WEST LONDON.—The annual social evening took place at the Lecture Hall, Ealing, on February 27th, Mr. Jacobs presiding. The programme was varied and interesting. Miss Harries played a pianoforte solo, Miss Whitehead, Mr. Langton Johnson, Miss Watson, Miss Eilian Hughes, Mr. John Sanger, and Miss Jeffcoat recited; Miss Harries, Miss Humphries, Miss Nora Charsley-Thomas, Mr. Banfill, Miss Beta Banfill, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Leicester Romayne sang.

OTHER MEETINGS.

GLASGOW.—Three short papers on Dickens's characters were read at a meeting of the Glasgow Dickens Society held last month in the Accountants' Hall, St. Vincent Street. Mr. John D. Parker, Vice-president, presided. Speaking of the novelist's *Sketches of Young Gentlemen*, Mr. Douglas Parker said that these, though not so well known, had all the characteristics of Dickens's more famous works. Mr. George M'Ruer, in a sketch of "Dick Swiveller," claimed that the virtues of that character overshadowed his failings, and that his actions were always of the most unselfish kind. In the course of a paper on "The Humour of Martin Chuzzlewit," Mr. George Henderson pointed out that although some critics considered Mrs. Gamp only the crude picture of a lewd nonentity, most literary judges now placed her beside Falstaff, and beyond comparison with any similar character.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

APRIL

2. Edinburgh Branch: Closing meeting of session, St. Andrew Square.
   Toronto Branch: "David Copperfield." Papers and discussion.
3. Manchester Branch: Annual meeting, at Onward Hall, at 7.30.
   Hull Branch: Annual meeting, at 8.
4. Brighton Branch: Evening arranged by Mr. F. J. Gauntlett, at Steine House, Old Steine, at 8.
7. Liverpool Branch: "On Eating and Drinking," by Mr. R. T. Boden, M.A., at Royal Institution, at 8.
8. Shrewsbury Branch: Fortnightly meeting, at County Café, at 8.
9. Forest Gate Branch: Recital by Mr. John Toscenie. Interspersed with old English Ballads mentioned in Dickens, at Earlham Hall.

10. Sheffield Branch: Social meeting, at Cutlers' Hall, 8.
Birmingham Branch: "From 'Faerie Queene' to Little Nell," by Mr. G. W. Davis, at Association Buildings, Dale End, at 8.
13. Brixton Branch: Evening arranged by Miss Kathleen Marriott, at Brixton Independent Church, at 8.
15. Bristol and Clifton Dickens Society: Annual Conversazione.
16. Maidstone Branch: Evening arranged by Mr. Hunt.
21. Liverpool Branch: Annual meeting.
23. Blackheath Branch: Conversazione, at Avenue House, Avenue Road, Lewisham, at 8.
27. Southampton Branch: Monthly meeting, at Mount Pleasant Council School, at 8.
30. Needlework and Charitable Guild: Dance, at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, E.C., 7.30. Tickets, 2s. 6d. single; 4s. 6d. double (inclusive).
Stockport Branch: Annual meeting, at Sunday-school, at 8.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS, &c.

Letters and Speeches of Charles Dickens. In the "National" Edition. 2 vols., with portrait to each. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

Leaves from a Life. (Reminiscences of Dickens and others.) London: Eveleigh Nash. 10s. net.

Charles Dickens, Novelist. By Owen Ellison. In the "Biography Books." Sisley's, Ltd. 6d. net, cloth; 1s. net, leather.

The Works of Charles Dickens. "The Eighteenpenny Illustrated" Edition. 20 vols. Pocket size. 1s. 6d. net cloth, each; 2s. 6d. leather, each. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., and Henry Frowde.

The Ivy Green. Words by Charles Dickens. Music by E. H. Tiffany. Ottawa: McKechnie & Co.

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." By B. W. Matz. Fully illustrated. Presentation plate of Dickens. *The Bookman*, March.

"A Dickens Assembly." By Kester. Illus. *Leeds Yorkshire Post*, February 15.

"Composite Story from Dickens's Novels." Illus. *New York Times*, February 23.

"Dickens's Characters in Real Life." Illustration of Dickens Banquet at Toronto. *Toronto Globe*, February 15.

"Special Dickens Number" of *The Bookshelf*, February. London: Chapman & Hall. Post free, 1d.

"Boz Club and National Dickens Library." By Clement K. Shorter. In literary page of *The Sphere*, Feb. 22.

"Dickens in the Class War." By Edwin Pugh. *New Age*, February 22, and continued.

"Miscellaneous Papers of Charles Dickens." *Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 26.

"Dickens as a Social Reformer." By Dr. A. W. Ward. *The Reader's Review* (60, Chandos Street), March.

"Pickwick Bicycle Club." (*Wayside Echoes.*) *The Irish Cyclist*, March 4.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." New play at Manchester. *The Stage* March 5.

"Dickens 'Discoveries.'" *Daily Telegraph*, March 5; *Notts Guardian*, March 6; *Grimsby Daily Telegraph*, March 7.

"The Great Baby." Reprinted from *Household Words*. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, March 10.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood—with Illustrations." By W. *Manchester City News*, March 7.

CHARACTERS FROM "DAVID COPPERFIELD"
Drawn by J. C. D'Arnaud Gerkens

[*See page* 129.